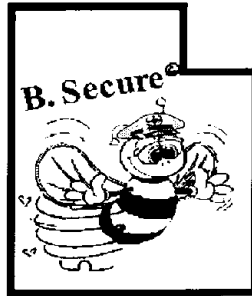


# "Taking out the pain....From getting Stung"

I know from experience probably already realize that we worry about. Here are few to be places to get more information



how painful it can be to get stung. You have plenty of scams and cons to cautious of and some suggestion for about them.

## Credit Cards

Most credit card fraud card being stolen. If any of your immediately to help limit your loss. The Fair Credit Billing Act says that victims of credit card fraud can be billed a maximum of \$50.00. This is true even if the thief uses your ATM card for withdrawals. Also, remember to review your credit card bill each month to make sure that the charges are accurate. Below are several ways to protect your cards:

occurs within 48 hours of the credit cards are stolen, report the crime

- ★ Only disclose your account number over the phone to reputable companies.
- ★ Never put your account number on the outside of an envelope.
- ★ Draw a line through blank spaces on charge slips and never sign a blank charge slip.
- ★ Rip up carbons from charges and compare your receipts to your monthly statements.
- ★ Don't carry all your credit cards with you.
- ★ Memorize your PIN number and DO NOT use a number like your birthday etc.
- ★ If you use a service that registers all your cards make sure you understand what the company will do for you and your liability for the cards.

## Telemarketing Scams

Fraudulent telemarketers have found another way to steal your money right from your checking account. The scam usually works like this. You will receive a postcard or a phone call explaining how you have won a prize, or qualify for a new credit card, regardless of past credit problems. The telemarketer than asks if you have a checking account in order to process or qualify for this offer. If you say yes and give them the number off the bottom of your check you have just been stung. This authorizes them to pull money from your account directly into theirs. Usually you will not know about it until you get a statement . . . a month later.

If you are stung remember that others might be watching. *Double scamming* or *reloading* is also very popular, which means once you have been stung you may be targeted specifically in the future. A typical example of such a scam occurs when a person calls offering to get your lost money back for a fee. Once they get your payment, they disappear. There are some organizations that will help victims of scams, but they never charge for their assistance.

## Identity Theft

One very popular scam is identity theft, which occurs without you even knowing it. The junk mail that you throw out can be stolen and the information can be used against you. In the con game this is called *dumpster diving*. Someone else can use your discarded pre-approved credit card applications, change the address, and get credit cards in your name. The cards are shipped to the new address, used once, then thrown away.

Unfortunately there are so many scams and cons out there that I could fill up two papers telling you about them. Luckily there is some good information on the net about avoiding scams. Here are some great sites on scams and cons.

<http://www.ultimatemoney maker.com/scams.html>

<http://www.congames.com/identity.html>

<http://www.bbb.org/>

Remember if you are unfortunate enough to get stung, report it to the authorities so that the next scam can be stopped before someone else becomes a victim.

Until next month to "**Be safe, Be smart, and be secure!**"